

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

Publication No. 157140

ISSN 0012-2874

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the
old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

Vol. 56 No. 2

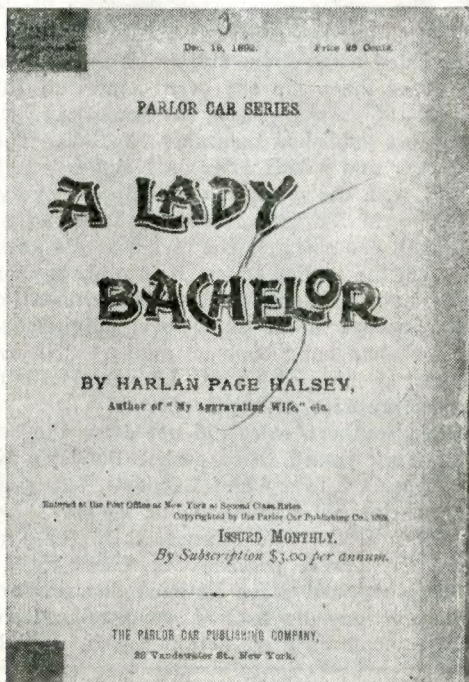
April 1987

Whole No. 584

The Civil War In Dime Novels

A BIBLIOGRAPHIC STUDY

By Edward T. LeBlanc



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES #224

PARLOR CAR SERIES

Publisher: Parlor Car Publishing Co., 23 Vandewater St., New York (George Monro. Issues: 3 (highest seen). Dates: October-December 1892. Schedule: monthly. Size: 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x5". Pages: 150+. Price: 25c. Illustrations: None. Contents: #1 My Aggravating Wife, by Harlan Page Halsey. #2 The Confessions of an Imp, anonymous. #3 A Lady Bachelor, by Harlan Page Halsey. NOTE: Halsey was the author of the Old Sleuth stories.

The Civil War In Dime Novels

A BIBLIOGRAPHIC STUDY

By Edward T. LeBlanc

The civil war was a traumatic experience for both the north and the south. What to northerners appeared to be a few skirmishes with bands playing and a return of victorious troops by midsummer, turned out to be a bloody war that lasted 4 years with half a million deaths. Once the reality set in the weekly newspapers such as Harpers Weekly and Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper covered the grim accounts of the battles and skirmishes of the war with a flair.

The dime novel which had just come into existence a year before was not far behind with fictional and storied accounts of harrowing experiences and heroic deeds of the fighting men. Surprisingly both Beadle and George Munro, the major dime novel publishers at the time published very few civil war stories. In fact both Beadle and Munro published only one story each in their Beadles Dime Novels and Munro's Ten Cent Novels. American Tales, ascribed to Beadle by Johannsen bore the inscription "American News Co., Publisher's Agents." The stories were copyrighted by Sinclair Tousey, head of the American News Co., but the copyright notice was sent to Beadle. Maybe Beadle, because he shied away from stories of the civil war, used a publishing pseudonym to issue them. In any event American Tales continued for 44 issues until April 30, 1867. Thirteen of the issues were stories of the civil war, the last of which was published December 12, 1865. The series was resurrected by Beadle a year and a half later on November 1, 1868 with Beadle shown as publisher and with the usual salmon colored covers of other Beadle publications. The stories in the new American Tales were strictly western and border stories, though one story of the civil war did sneak in, probably a left over manuscript from the earlier series. It is probably that Beadle avoided civil war stories so as not to offend his southern circulation. In any event the war was virtually ignored in his dime novel publications.

He did however publish a hand book on military drill and his Dime Biographical Library featured lives of Grant, Lincoln, McClelland and Parson Brownlow as well as biographies of border heroes.

The lack of possible southern sales did not deter the smaller publishers. T. R. Dawley of New York issued three series, Dawley's New War Novels, Dawley's Camp and Fireside Library and Dawley's Ten Penny Novels. The latter featured border stories, but a few were of the war. Late in 1865 these series were sold to Hilton & Co. who reissued them for a number of years. Some of the non war stories were published by Hurst as late as the 1890's. The Dawley stories were, in most cases fictional documentaries depicting the bloody and brutal raids of guerilla leaders. Quantrell, Mosby, Jerome Clark and others were written about in gory details which could be used by some

DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP — Vol. 56, No. 2, Whole No. 584 — April 1987
Publications No. 157140 ISSN 0012-2874

Published six times per year at 821 Vermont Street, Lawrence, Kansas 66044. Edward T. LeBlanc, editor, 87 School Street, Fall River, Mass. 02720, to whom new and renewal subscriptions, address changes and advertising should be sent. Second class postage paid at Lawrence, Kansas 66044. Subscription: \$10 per year. Ad rates: 15c per word, \$3.00 per column inch; \$6.00 per quarter page; \$8.00 per half page and \$15.00 per full page.

Postmaster: Send form 3579 to 821 Vermont St., Lawrence, Kans. 66044

present day horror movie producers. I reviewed one of these stories in ms of the Dime Novel Roundup in some detail. Torture and maiming are the main ingredients of the story.

There was another aspect to dime novels and the civil war. It has often been stated that soldiers spent much of their time in camp between marches and battles in reading dime novels. A roadside museum in Massachusetts exhibited a Beadles Dime Novel signed by a soldier with his regiment and company inscribed. The note that accompanied the exhibit stated that the novel had been found among the effects of a dead soldier and had been sent to his next of kin in Massachusetts. There is no doubt that soldiers read dime novels. Many fly-by-night publishers directed their publications to this clientele with such series titles as "Original Union Novels," "Chaney's Union Novels," "Hilton's Union Novels," and "Redpath's Books for the Camp Fires." The stories in these publications were not about the civil war. Redpath published such titles as Gulliver's Travels, The Battle of Waterloo, and stories by Balzac. Beadle donated thousands of dime novels to the troops, and many personal diaries and histories mention reading them as a means of combating the boredom of camp life.

From the late 1860's to September 1882, no dime novel civil war story has been found. There is the possibility that one or two may have escaped my research, and be hidden in some nondescript title. However, the trade mark of most dime novels in its illustrative title. Maybe some sociologist could come up with a reason for this absence.

In September 1882 the Novelist Publishing Co. started the War Library which lasted 413 issues until August 1890. There were actually only 151 stories, reprints making up the difference. Some stories were reprinted as many as four times. In addition a pocket edition was issued in 1883 but this lasted only twelve issues. The War Library started a modest number of other series devoted to the civil war. In December of the same year, Frank Tousey began the Five Cent Weekly Library which recounted the adventures of Union Dick and Cavalry Jack for 75 weeks. Some of the series featured stories of adventure, but the main theme of the stories was the civil war. In August of 1883 came the Army and Navy Library which reprinted stories from the War Library. The publisher was given as Army and Navy Publishing Co. This was probably the same publisher as the War Library under a different name. This library was short lived lasting only 40 issues. The Union Library was even of shorter duration, only 13 issues in 1890. Some collectors and researchers, Ralph Smith and the late J. Edward Leithhead ascribed Street and Smith as publisher of these libraries due to the similarity of address, but there is no evidence in the Street and Smith archives at Syracuse University to support this contention. Most New York dime novel publishers of this era clustered in the William and Rose Street area, very much as Fleet Street was the center of publishing in London, so trying to identify true publishers from similarity of address can lead to wrong assumptions. Street and Smith later used aliases in publishing some of its dime novels, i.e. Howard Ainslee & Co. for their Army and Navy Weekly and Half Holiday in 1898 and the Winner Library Company, for many of its series during 1901-1906.

In 1896 Street and Smith issued a series devoted to the civil war, Red, White and Blue. This was published with colored covers and featured Phil Stirling in the Union Army and his cousin Ralph Stirling in the Confederate navy. Their adventures alternated each week. Since they were in different services their meeting on the battlefield was avoided. In 1904 Frank Tousey started the Blue and Gray Weekly with much fanfare but it lasted only 32

issues. Like the Red, White and Blue Library it featured the adventures of a boy in blue and a boy in gray alternating each week. This was the last series which featured stories of the civil war.

In the 1880's the serial story papers such as Boys of New York, Golden Weekly, Golden Hours and a few others ran some civil war stories. These were later reprinted in the libraries such as Wide Awake Library, Pluck and Luck and Brave and Bold. Pluck and Luck continued until 1929 with the last civil war story appearing in 1925.

The early stories were directed at an adult audience, and some had complicated plots. The following are examples of story lines. In "California Joe; or, The Angel of the Wilderness" by Lt. Col. Hazeltine. (American Tales No. 12, 1864) Walter Barrett, a Virginian joins the ranks of the Union. His unit is camped opposite the Confederate army in preparation for the coming battle of the Wilderness. His betrothed lives in a southern mansion, what else, between the lines. Some of his fellow soldiers believe he may be a Southern spy because of his birthright. California Joe, a well known Union scout comes to his aid when a fight breaks out. A soldier named Hogg is not convinced of Walter's loyalty regardless of Joe's testimony in his behalf. Walter, accompanied by California Joe, visit the mansion to warn Lillie of the impending battle and for her to seek safety. They are captured by the rebels. Hogg accuses Walter of deserting. In absentia he is found guilty and his name is so entered on the records. The captured trio are taken to Richmond and then on the Charleston as prisoners of war. California Joe makes his escape and spends a good part of the story in getting Walter and Lillie free. In a bold attempt he does free them providing Walter with a Confederate uniform, which while aiding him effecting his escape, further incriminates him with the Union army. Walter falls into the hands of Union troops and is hauled before the provost marshal and found guilty of being a deserter and a Confederate spy. He is sentenced to be hanged. Meanwhile California Joe and Lillie are making their way to the provost marshal to testify in Walter's behalf. The scene is set. Walter, after a night of writing last letters to friends and relatives is marched off to the gallows. The chaplain gives a last prayer, the rope is placed around his neck, the cap is drawn over his face, the signal is given, and the trap is sprung. The scene immediately changes. California Joe arrives at the provost marshal's office and with explanations made rushes off to the scene of the hanging. Will he be in time? Of course. The hangman, as he released the trap heard shouts and recognized California Joe. He grabbed the victim and held him, pushing him to the solid edge of the gallows platform. And so the lovers were reunited and went off hand and hand to be wed after the war was over.

In "Battle Echoes; or, Baudin's Boys at Chantilly" by Walter Brisbane, we have a truly melodramatic tale with the war as a background. This is War Library No. 18, January 13, 1883. Baudin is introduced as an idle rich Philadelphian with a charming but unloving wife. Wishing to do his part in the war, he organizes a company of Pennsylvania woodsmen and with a minimum of training joins the Union forces in Virginia just outside Washington. He provides a residence and an ample allowance for his wife in the Washington area. She is accepted in the social milieu of the city. She meets a suave member of Italian embassy and they are soon an item for the gossip papers. They soon plot to get rid of her husband. An assassin in the employ of the Italian embassy is hired to do the job. He fails in his attempts. Finally he joins Baudin's unit. Baudin soon finds himself shot at from both sides. Baudin meanwhile has been distinguishing himself in the almost daily

kirmishes with the Confederate army. At one point he finds himself a considerable distance behind the Confederate lines. In making his way back he is befriended by a young lady. A Northerner who came South with her family before the war. She provides him with clothes suited to a farmer and drives him through the lines. Without her assistance he doubted that he could have made it. Baudin has become a celebrity with his name in headlines in the Washington papers. His wife begins to have second thoughts and tells her lover they are through. However, having determined that upon the death of her husband and his marriage to her would make him a rich man, he will have none of it. She insists but this only enrages him, and he strangles her. Such are the fruits of evil. This of course frees Baudin to pursue the young lady from Virginia. Here again the happy ending is a wedding at the end of the war.

In another War Library, No. 120, "Marching Through Georgia; or, Perils of an Irish Firebrand" December 27, 1884, we have Denis Delaney leading a charge on an artillery piece being mounted by the Confederates at a key point just before the battle of Corinth. This is done in opposition to the sergeant in charge of the detail. The Confederates are put to rout and the gun is spiked. During the battle the next day Delaney distinguishes himself and at one point saves the life of General Taylor. After the battle he is brought up on charges of insubordination in the face of the enemy, a charge punishable by death by firing squad. He being naive in the ways of court-martials admits that he did disobey the sergeant's orders. He is prevented from any explanation by the prosecuting officer and before a smirking jealous sergeant he is sentenced to be shot the next morning. His friends start to work in his behalf. General Taylor is off at a staff conference and cannot be reached. Delaney is led with others before the firing squad and is shot though not mortally wounded. His friends had tampered with the firing squad's muskets, thus saving his life. General Taylor finally returns and puts things straight. Later in the story the burning of Atlanta is described: "Hood, dispirited and overwhelmed, began to evacuate Atlanta. Sending off only such provision as he could carry in his swift retreat, he opens the store houses of the remainder to the citizens. The surplus ammunition was loaded on cars which were run out a little way on the August railroad and blown up—the explosion shaking the shores of the Chattahoochee river miles away. Six engines and a hundred cars were gathered together and set on fire, and the torches applied to a thousand bales of cotton, which made the midnight heavens glow as though a conflagration was raging in the sky.

"Lighted on his sorrowful way by such a sea of fire, Hood, with the mere remnant of his army, moved swiftly across the country towards Macon. The alarmed inhabitants, in carriages, wagons, and every vehicle that could be pressed into service, streamed after, making a scene of confusion and wild terror such as war alone can create." Reminds me of a similar scene in "Gone With the Wind."

"Atlanta was found deserted, and Sherman marched triumphantly in and took possession."

The later series such as Red, White and Blue and Blue and Gray were directed to a younger readership. Blue and Gray No. 3 "Holding the Line; or, The Boys in Blue's Great Defence" is a good example. Jack Clark captures a girl spy who turns out to be Nellie Prentiss. At Fairdale Academy, before the war, Jack Clark had a dear friend and chum, a young Virginian named Will Prentiss. With the outbreak of the war, Will went to Virginia to take command of a company of Southern youths, who styled themselves the

Virginia Grays. It was a hard thought for Jack and Will that they must in loyalty to that part of the country to which each belonged, take up arms against each other. Their case was only one of thousands where friends and even brothers were compelled to become foes.

The Prentiss family was one of the most honored in Virginia. Colonel Prentiss had left his plantation to defend the cause of the Confederacy. Will was off with his company but Nellie Prentiss, the talented and beautiful sister, had not been content to remain at home. She had played successfully the part of a female spy. By her clever work in Washington the Confederacy had greatly profitted. Jack Clark and Nellie Prentiss had met during a visit of the young girl to Fairdale. An attachment of the deepest sort had sprung up between them. But now the war had placed a wide gulf between them. The effect upon each, therefore, as they now met—she in the role of spy, and his prisoner—can well be imagined.

Chivalry might have bidden Jack Clark to free her, but duty, the sternest of all, demanded of him that he hold her as a prisoner. The safety of the country, the success of his cause demanded it. It was a hard moment for Jack Clark.

As the detachment approached a wooded area Nellie told Jack that an ambush awaited them. He ordered his troop to halt whereupon the Confederates came out of hiding and rushed to attack. In the confusion Nellie Prentiss rode off toward the top of a hill. Clark's lieutenant aimed at her but was stopped by Jack who felt that she had saved the troop from possible annihilation and should be allowed her freedom. He had the messages she was carrying and believed it was a fair exchange.

Later after escaping the Confederates he delivered the messages to General Butler and explained the escape of the spy. General Butler was about to charge him with dereliction of duty but at the intervention of President Lincoln who was visiting the front at the time, the charges were not brought.

I hope these short summaries will give a glimpse of what was read and probably shaped the perception of millions of Americans toward the Civil War. The dime novel has been overlooked in this area, probably because very few individual titles made the best seller lists, but their large numbers had an impact. This is an area of research for future studies.

A DIME NOVEL COLLECTORS BOOK SHELF

YESTERDAY'S FACES, VOLUME 3. By Robert Sampson, Bowling Green State Univ., Bowling Green, Ohio 43403. Continues the review of series characters in the pulps from Fu Man Chu to Simon Trapp, the sinister villains to the suave gentlemen crooks. Excellent and informative.

HEROES AND HUMANITIES, Detective Fiction and Culture, by Ray B. Browne. Bowling Green State Univ., Popular Press, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403. Excellent in depth review of writings of selected mystery writers.

RECENT ARTICLES ABOUT DIME NOVELS, SERIES BOOKS, ETC.

AT PREP SCHOOL IN A GENTLE ERA, by Solange DeSantis. Philadelphia Inquirer, Jan. 26, 1987. Reviews PBS's American Playhouse Series featuring one of Owen Johnson's Lawrenceville stories. It appears that another play is being planned from the same series. (Sent in by Owen Cobb)

WHEN HEROSM COST A DIME, by Don Dornerbrook. Leesburg, Fla. Commercial, date not known (March 1987). A review of the Merriwell collection of Russell Mowry with many dime novels illustrated and a portrait of Russ.

WANTED BOOKS BY EDWARD STRATEMEYER,

HIS PSEUDONYMS,
AND HIS SYNDICATE HOUSE NAMES

Interested in the following:

Appleton, Victor

Don Sturdy Series
Motion Picture Chums Series
Moving Picture Boys Series
Tom Swift Series

Barnum, Vance

Frank and Andy Series
Joe Strong Series

Bonehill, Captain Ralph

Boy Hunters Series
Flag and Frontier Series
Flag and Freedom Series
Frontier Series
Mexican War Series
Young Hunters Series
Young Sportsman Series

Chapman, Allen

Allen Chapman Series
Boys of Business Series
Boy's Pocket Library
Darewell Chums Series
Fred Fenton Series
Radio Boys Series
Ralph (Railroad) Series
Tom Fairfield Series

Dixon, Franklin W.

Hardy Boys Series
Ted Scott Flying Stories

Rockwood, Roy

Bomba, The Jungle Boy Series
Dave Dashaway Series
Dave Fearless Series
Deep Sea Series
Great Marvel Series
Speedwell Boys Series

Stratemeyer, Edward

American Boys Biographical Series
Bound to Succeed Series
Bound to Win Series
Colonial Series
Dave Porter Series
Great American Industries Series
Lakeport Series
Mexican War Series
Minute Boys Series
Old Glory Series
Pan-American Series
Ship and Shore Series
Soldiers of Fortune Series
Stratemeyer Popular Series
Working Upward Series

Webster, Frank E.

Webster Series

Winfield, Arthur M.

Bright and Bold Series
Putnam Hall Series
Rover Boys Series

Young, Clarence

Jack Ranger Series
Motor Boys Series
Racer Boys Series

Premium Paid for Dust Jackets

ARTHUR SHERMAN

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THE INNOVATIVE MR. GLEASON — By Stanley A. Pachon

(continued)

Mr. Gleason stated that he started The Flag of Our Union in 1843, but all the records seen give 1846 as the correct date. Mr. Gleason was also in error in calling a rival publication "Barnums Illustrated News." In all 48 numbers of this publication it was titled simple "Illustrated News." Only twice during the run of this publication was Barnum's name mentioned. It was with the issue of Aug. 13, 1853, a small notation on an inside page stated: 'P. T. Barnum, Special Partner

H. D. Beach, General Partner"

and in the last issue of the Illustrated News on the front page was this notation:

"Sundry papers having published reports that Mr. Barnum had lost \$40,000 by this enterprise, the publishers would merely add that he has never invested but \$20,000, hence such reports are absurd. The fact is the above sale secured to Mr. Barnum the eventual return of his special capital without any loss whatever

H. D. Beach General Partner

P. T. Barnum, Special Partner

New York, Nov. 10, 1853.'

On the same page was a statement by Mr. Gleason of his purchase of the Illustrated News and its merging with his own. This statement was also dated Nov. 10, 1853.

The Illustrated News started Jan. 1, 1853 and ended Nov. 26, 1853 with Vol. 2 No. 48.

Incidentally among the writers who contributed to the pages of the Illustrated News was Horatio Alger, Jr. who graced its pages with two poems as follows:

"For the Illustrated News

GERALDINE

By Horatio Alger, Esquire

Apr. 16, 1853 Vol. 1 #16

and

"For the Illustrated News

WELCOME TO MAY

by Horatio Alger, Jr."

May 7, 1853. Vol. 1 No. 19

Mr. Gleason in 1881 was described as being 64 years old. His face was smooth and full with a greying mustache and quite grey hair. It was stated that there was no man in Boston more respected by his employees that he was. Mr. Gleason had also traveled extensively in Europe and gave graphic and interesting descriptions of his experiences abroad.

Among reasons given for Mr. Gleason's return to publishing was the fact that his finances had dwindled sharply and to recoup his losses he decided to return to the field he was most familiar with, and again "ride" the crest of success. But conditions began changing considerably from the time he retired. There were more publications issued, all competing for the readers interest. The large weekly story papers had increased their circulation and they all tried to monopolize the more popular authors with exclusive contracts. Alger was under such a contract when writing for Street & Smith. Due to his strained financial position Gleason was in no position to secure the more popular authors for his publications. This was a far cry from the time when Gleason paid Edgar Allan Poe \$5.00 for a contribution to the Flag of Our Union.

But Gleason had high hopes he would succeed again. In 1858 he launched his initial volume of *LINE OF BATTLESHIP* but it lasted only a little over a year. He then, in 1860, came out with his *Gleason's Literary Companion* which lasted to 1870. He published the *Home Circle* and in 1872 started his *Gleason's Monthly Companion*. To bolster his sagging financial position he became personal manager of the American and European Chromo Publishing Co. in Boston. This kept him afloat for a while, but with each passing year his financial position became more precarious until in 1887 he decided to give up the struggle. He spent the last years of his life in a home for indigents where he died.

The *Yankee Blade* took over his subscriptions list and began reprinting many of Alger's stories from the earlier issues, possibly to give the impression that Alger was writing for the *Yankee Blade*. It, too, began to feel its age and lack of interest in it, being reduced from the large story paper size to that of a tabloid it limped in this fashion for several years, and in 1894 it, too, gave up its ghost after 55 years of publication.

Elliott, Thomas and Talbot before starting their own publishing careers all had worked in the Gleason establishment. It is a sad commentary to note that those who knew Gleason well and were affluent enough permitted him to die alone in the "home" for the indigents.

NEWS NOTES

The Dime Novel Division of the American Culture Association met at Montreal March 27 and 28. Dime novel discussion with exchange of ideas was the order of the day. These conferences are worth attending if only for the informal gatherings where information and ideas can be aired and tried out for validity with other popular literature enthusiasts.

The formal program was well attended with papers presented as follows:

The Oliver Optic-Louisa May Alcott Feud, by John T. Dizer, Jr.

Will the Real Bertha M. Clay Please Stand Up, by Arlene Moore

Science Fiction in Dime Novels, by Edward T. LeBlanc

The Travels of Frank Reade, Jr., by J. Randolph Cox

Laurie York Erskine and Renfrew of the Mounted, by David K. Vaughan

The Writer Learns His Craft. A review of men of letters who first wrote dime novels, by Lydia S. Godfrey

Gustaf Tenggren and His Little Golden Books, by Karen Nelson Hoyle

Joseph Badger's Beadle Dime Novels about Joaquin Murietta, by James L. Evans.

Next years session will be held in New Orleans late in March 1988. More specifics will be announced later.

NEW MEMBERS

314 Tom Benke, 609 Union, Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

315 Brenda Rodgers (A Book Deal), 4719 Lower Roswell Road, Marietta, Ga. 30068

NEW ADDRESSES

300 Robert W. Story, 7 Barra Lane, Broomland, Irvine, Ayershire, Scotland KA11 1DA

48 James D. Thueson, 262 Goodrich Ave. #1, St. Paul, Minn. 55102-2719

126 Louis Bodnar, Jr., 1118 Stewart St., Chesapeake, Va. 23324

SEND SASE for list of old Childrens, Boys Books (and Girls), Mysteries, etc. H. W. Miller (ye Roundup Printer), 821 Vermont, Lawrence, Kansas 66044



WANTED FRANK MERRIWELL

HARD COVER SERIES

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FEDERAL BOOK COMPANY ISSUES.

Covers are in various shades of green!

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DAVID MCKAY FORMATS:

- 1) Covers in Maroon (*reddish chocolate brown*).
First 24 titles only were produced.
- 2) Covers in Yellow (beige) with black lettering,
except Author's name in red. 28 titles produced.

THE HARD-COVER MERRIWELL STORIES

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Frank Merriwell's Schooldays . . . 1901 | 16. Frank Merriwell's Secret 1904 |
| 2. Frank Merriwell's Chums 1902 | 17. Frank Merriwell's Loyalty 1904 |
| 3. Frank Merriwell's Foes 1902 | 18. Frank Merriwell's Reward 1900 |
| 4. Frank Merriwell's Trip West . . . 1902 | 19. Frank Merriwell's Faith 1900 |
| 5. Frank Merriwell Down South . . . 1903 | 20. Frank Merriwell's Victories . . . 1900 |
| 6. Frank Merriwell's Bravery 1903 | 21. Frank Merriwell's Power 1900 |
| 7. Frank Merriwell Races 1903 | 22. Frank Merriwell's Set-Back 1901 |
| 8. Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour . . 1903 | 23. Frank Merriwell's False Friend . . 1901 |
| 9. Frank Merriwell at Yale 1903 | 24. Frank Merriwell's Brother or,
The Greatest Triumph of All 1901 |
| 10. Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield . . 1903 | 25. Frank Merriwell in Camp 1904 |
| 11. Frank Merriwell's Courage 1903 | 26. Frank Merriwell's Vacation 1898 |
| 12. Frank Merriwell's Daring 1903 | 27. Frank Merriwell's Cruise 1898 |
| 13. Frank Merriwell's Skill 1903 | 28. Frank Merriwell's Lads or,
The Boys Who Got Another Chance 1911 |
| 14. Frank Merriwell's Champions . . . 1904 | |
| 15. Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale . 1904 | |

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THE MERRIWELL MEDAL

By Fred L. King

An interesting bit of Frank Merriwell memorabilia is a medal once offered by Street & Smith to readers of Tip Top Weekly. When the magazine had been given enough time to prove its popularity the publishers offered the medal starting with the Dec. 31, 1898, issue No. 142. The back page of several issues described the medal as, "The badge consists of a circular disc, overlaid on a Greek Cross, and a pendant from a bar bearing the legend, 'Tip Top League.' The circle bears the password of the League, 'True as Steel,' and a raised medallion head of Frank Merriwell. An exact picture for the league badge was promised to appear in the following issue No. 143.



A picture of the badge did not appear, however, for several issues, though each succeeding issue explained that the engraver had not been able to furnish an engraving for illustration. Finally, in issue No. 146 dated January 28, 1899, the badge was shown for the first time. Readers were required to send 10c plus two coupons clipped from the magazine in order to secure a badge. Non-readers could get the badge for 50c cash but it seems unlikely that anyone wanting one would have sent the extra money, when spending 5c for the magazine with the coupons would have been much less expensive. The offer of the medal continued to occupy a full page in the magazine for many weeks, then was reduced to a half-page ad and was finally omitted from issue No. 238 dated Nov. 3, 1900.

Just how many badges were mailed out would probably be difficult to determine with accuracy at this late date, but there must have been a great many issued. Perhaps a Tip Top reader has noted a report of the number of medals distributed that I have missed. The offer did appear in millions of magazines over a period of nearly two years. Still, there seems to be few of the badges surviving today. Perhaps the medals were simply something that kids obtained and valued for a time, then discarded. Ed LeBlanc once told me he didn't know anyone who had one of the medals in a Merriwell collection and I haven't run across a collector myself who has one, so they don't turn up very often. Tip Top Weekly claims that a second order from the manufacturer was made to supply the demand, but doesn't give numbers of medals produced.

I was especially pleased to see one of the badges offered recently in a mail auction of collectibles. When I was able to purchase it, I found the medal to be rather nicely turned out and designed just as the drawing in the magazine offers pictures it. It appears to be cast of "pot metal" (a term used in the foundry to describe a mixture of whatever scrap metals are lying about the shop at the moment). The badge I have is still golden in color, finished in gilt" as the ad promised, and shows only slight rubbing from wear. The manufacturer's name is stamped on both the cross and the bar, Whitehead & Hoag Co., Newark, N. J.

If any Dime Novel Roundup reader has noted a report of the number of badges distributed in an issue of Tip Top Weekly that I have missed, I would be interested in hearing of it.

FOR SALE

A Collection Of English "Penny Dreadfuls"

"Penny dreadfuls" are penny-part novels and cheap periodicals consisting of tales of adventure and sensation, and illustrated with "lurid" woodcuts. Issued in 8, 12 or 16-page gatherings, they were sold at Newsagents' and corner shops throughout England in the nineteenth century. Originally published in the period 1830 to 1860 for adult readers, from the 1860s to their demise around 1910 "dreadfuls" were almost exclusively aimed at the teenage market. While the young eagerly devoured this exciting fiction, their elders and betters dubbed these books "dreadfuls" and "penny packets of poison."

Much of this vast sub-literature has been destroyed, burnt, pulped. Only rarely does the odd volume appear in booksellers' lists. MY COLLECTION OF SOME 300 VOLUMES IS TO BE SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER (as a collection, not separately).

The collection begins with eight penny-part novels by George W. M. Reynolds, including his monumental MYSTERIES OF LONDON and MYSTERIES OF THE COURT OF LONDON. There are numerous examples of pirate, smuggler and highwayman literature, including those worthies DICK TURPIN, JACK SHEPPARD, CARTOUCHE and the burglar-murderer CHARLES PEACE. The most famous of all Victorian Dick Turpin stories has the innocuous title of BLACK BESS, although the sub-title THE KNIGHT OF THE ROAD suggests what is in store for the reader prepared to wade through 2,028 double-column pages of reckless adventure. The key Victorian boys' writer was undoubtedly Samuel Bracebridge Hemming, whose notorious young hero JACK HARKAWAY gets embroiled in bloody derring-do throughout the English-speaking world before ending up fighting for the flag in the Boer War. Nor is the book that inspired the series missing in the collection, George Emmett's TOM WILDRAKE (all 890 pages of it). Besides Emmett and Hemming, two other boys' writers well represented in the collection are Edwin H. Burroughs ("the boys' Dickens") and Robert Justyn Lambe, who penned a series of historical romances for the publisher E. J. Brett.

Edwin John Brett, the kingpin of Victorian juvenile fiction, made a vast fortune from the weekly periodicals he and his successors issued between 1866 and 1905. His most famous venture BOYS OF ENGLAND appeared every week for 33 years (27 vols. are in the collection) while the companion story-paper YOUNG MEN OF GREAT BRITAIN ran for 23 years (17 vols. in the collection). Brett's other money-spinner was misleadingly entitled THE BOY'S COMIC JOURNAL (26 vols.), a weekly consisting of thrilling adventure fiction, but also containing some humorous material pilfered from American comic magazines. Many of these volumes are in the original and very rare publisher's binding. Brett published other story-papers, UP-TO-DATE BOYS, OUR BOYS' JOURNAL and the only Victorian fiction weekly to be published throughout in full colour, BOYS OF THE EMPIRE. Numerous other boys' papers followed the pattern Brett laid down. At the sensational end of the market there is THE BOYS'S STANDARD and THE BOY'S LEISURE HOUR, while the stories in COMRADES, THE BOYS' GRAPHIC and THE BOYS' HERALD were somewhat less bloodcurdling. American "dime novels" found their way into England via the Aldine Publishing Co. who put out such series as THE BOY'S FIRST-RATE POCKET LIBRARY, THE CHEERFUL LIBRARY and THE HALF-HOLIDAY LI-

BRARY around the turn of the century. During the 1900s, fiction for teenagers was increasingly dominated by Alfred Harmsworth (later Lord Northcliffe) whose threesome **THE BOYS' FRIEND**, **THE BOYS' HERALD** and **THE BOYS' REALM** swept all competition from the market.

Finally, fifteen posters advertising late-Victorian "dreadfuls" round off the collection.

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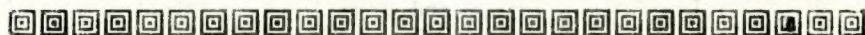
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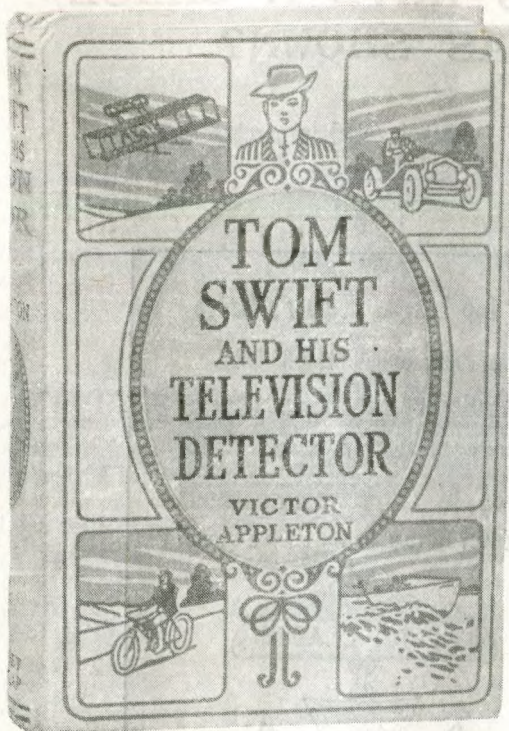


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